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A  
FUNERAL ORATION,

ON THE LATE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF

Pius the Sixth.

BY

THE REV. ARTHUR O'LEARY,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SOLEMN OBSEQUIES  
PERFORMED TO HIS MEMORY,

AT

SAINT PATRICK'S CHAPEL,

SUTTON-STREET, SOHO, LONDON,

BY ORDER OF

MONSIGNORE ERSKINE,

HIS HOLINESS'S AUDITOR,

On SATURDAY, the 16th of NOVEMBER,

1799.

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THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

FROM THE

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DESCRIPTION  
OF  
*THE SOLEMN OBSEQUIES*  
OF  
POPE PIUS VI.

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DECORATIONS.

THIS august ceremony was celebrated at St. Patrick's Chapel, Sutton-street, Soho, on Saturday the 16th of November, 1799, with as high a degree of the solemnity and magnificence of the Roman Catholic mode of worship, as could be expected in a country where it is not the established religion. The Chapel, the most elegant and capacious structure of the kind in London, was decorated in a style suited to the solemnity of the occasion. At the porticoes or entrances, mutes were stationed, habited in their usual mourning costume, with black staves in their hands. The whole interior of the walls, from the ceiling to the ground floor, was hung with black cloth; against which were affixed numerous plated reflectors with wax lights, the centre of the intermediate space between each reflector being occupied by the arms of the Sovereign Pontiff, viz. the Tiara and Cross Keys, painted on a blue ground, with a black margin, edged with gold. The columns which support the galleries, were also connected with festoons of black drapery, having plated reflectors, with wax tapers, over each column; whilst shields, with appropriate scriptural texts, and escutcheons, with emblems suitable to the Pontifical office, occupied the intervening space, forming a contrast with the sable appearance of the walls, at once both splendid and awful. The

The pulpit—the altar steps—the floors of the sanctuary, and body of the chapel, were also cloathed in a sable livery; and in the centre was erected a magnificent *Sarcophagus*, Mausoleum or Tomb, supposed to contain the remains of the Holy Pontiff. It consisted of a platform, to which there was a gradual ascent of several steps from the ground-floor, the sides whereof were parallel to those of the chapel, on the top of which was laid an oblong tomb, whose ends were ornamented with similar pontifical escutcheons and armorial bearings, to those already described; and on each side a white satin tablet, containing an inscription in Latin: of which the following is a translation:

“To the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius the Sixth, who, from the hatred of *his enemies* to the Christian Religion, was led captive into France, and died at Valence the 29th of August, 1799.”

On the tomb was laid a velvet cushion, superbly embroidered with gold, supporting a splendid model of the *Tiara*, or Papal Triple Crown, covered by a canopy elevated about twenty feet, and forming an obtuse angle at the top, on which were placed nine superb plumes of Ostrich feathers, rising in a pyramidical order, from the lower to the uppermost part of the roof.

The canopy was supported by four columns, with stripes of black and white, twining alternately in a serpentine manner around their shafts, and connected at top by festoons of black drapery, the steps at their bases being brilliantly illuminated by torches of white wax, in massy chandeliers, intermixed, with large plumes of white Ostrich feathers.

#### ASSEMBLAGE.

The Sanctuary was reserved for the exclusive accommodation of the officiating Bishops and Clergy.—*Monsignore Erskine*, the deceased Pontiff's Auditor, (under whose directions the plan and ceremonies



monies attending the solemn office were conducted) and several of the exiled Gallican Prelates; among whom were the Archbishop of Narbonne, and the Bishop of St. Paul de Leon.—The Tribune, on the gospel-side of the Sanctuary, was appropriated to the accommodation of the Foreign Ambassadors, and other personages of distinction, with whom it was compleatly filled; as were also the galleries, by a numerous concourse of decent people of both sexes, and of several religious descriptions; and as much of the ground-floor as was not occupied by the Mausoleum or Tomb, was filled by people of an inferior order, who behaved with remarkable piety and decorum.

#### THE DIRGE,

Or office for the repose of the soul of the deceased Pontiff, commenced in the Choir, shortly after ten. It was solemn, grand, and impressive. The sounds, alternately, variegated between the plaintive and sublime; diffused tender emotions of melancholy around, and excited, in the breasts of the audience, sentiments of the most unfeigned piety and devotion, mingling the deepest sympathy in the sufferings of so exalted and venerable a character, with the utmost detestation of the malice of his persecutors, who had refused, to his aged remains, the accustomed rites of sepulture. The Choir was numerous and compleat; it consisted of about an hundred voices, including those of the first eminence in the science of sacred music.—It is therefore unnecessary to add, that the music at High Mass, &c. as well as at the Dirge, was admirably executed.

#### HIGH MASS AND FUNERAL SERVICE.

The Dirge being finished at about twelve o'clock, the Right Rev. Doctor *Douglass*, Bishop of Centuria, and *Vicar Apostolic* of the London district, preceded by his assistant priest, deacon, subdeacon, master

master of ceremonies, mitre-bearer, book-bearer, and twelve acolythists, bearing twelve large white wax lighted flambeaus, advanced in a solemn slow procession, from the Sacristy to the Sanctuary, where, having made their accustomed reverences at the lower step leading to the Altar, High Mass commenced; which, being gone through with much solemnity, accompanied with sacred music, four bishops retired into the Sacristy, viz. the Bishops of *Montpelier*, *Rhodes*, *Lombes* and *Waterford*; and, within a few minutes, having clothed themselves in copes and mitres, returned from thence in solemn procession to the Sanctuary, each having a priest and an acolythist with a wax flambeau to attend him, where having alternately, according to their seniority, first devoutly saluted the Altar, and then the Right Rev. Dr. Douglass, they placed themselves in the seats prepared for them on the gospel-side of the Sanctuary; when the Clergyman, appointed to deliver the Oration, without being habited in surplice, alb, or stole, as is the custom, ascended the pulpit in a plain mourning cassock. The Oration being ended, the assistant bishops, above-mentioned, according to their seniority, each, alternately, with his attendant priest and acolythist, went in procession around the Mausoleum or Tomb, performing those ceremonies with holy water and incense, (as are prescribed in the ritual or ceremonial) the former being a type of the inward purity of the soul, the latter an emblem of the fervency of Christian piety, accompanied with solemn prayers and sacred music. After which all the episcopal dignitaries stood up, whilst the Right Rev. Dr. Douglass, the officiating bishop, performed similar devotions; and closed the solemn and religious ceremonies of the day, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

## FUNERAL

## FUNERAL ORATION.

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*Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass; but thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever.*

PSALM cii. ver. 10, 11, 12.

**Y**ES! O my God! *You lift up and you cast down; you humble and you exalt the sons of men. You cut off the breath of princes, and are terrible to the kings of the earth.* It is then we know your power, when, by the stroke of death, we feel what we are, that our life is but as a shadow that declineth, a vapour dispersed by the beams of the rising sun, or as the grass which loses at noon the verdure it had acquired from the morning dew.

It is a truth of which we are made sensible upon this mournful occasion, and in this sacred temple, where the trophies of death are displayed, and its image reflected on every side.

The mournful accents of the solemn dirge, the sable drapery that lines these walls, the vestments of the ministers of the sacred altar, this artificial darkness which is a figure of the darkness of the grave. The tapers that blaze around the sanctuary to put us in mind that when our mortal life is extinct, there is an immortal life beyond the grave, in a kingdom of light and bliss reserved for those who walk on earth by the light of the gospel. That tomb, in which the tiara and the sceptre, the pontifical dignity, and the power of the temporal prince, are covered over with a funeral shroud. Every object that strikes the eye, and every sound that vibrates

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on the ear, is an awful memento which reminds us of our approaching dissolution, points out the vanity and nothingness of all earthly grandeurs, and convinces us that in holiness of life, which unites us to God, and secures an immortal crown in the enjoyment of the sovereign good, consists the greatness, as well as the happiness of man. An awful truth often exemplified in many great characters, hurled from the summit of power and grandeur into an abyss of woe; whose unshaken virtue supported them under the severest trials, and whose greatness of soul shone conspicuous in their fall, as well as in their elevation. A truth particularly exemplified in his Holiness Pope Pius the Sixth, whose obsequies we are assembled to solemnize on this day. Pius the Sixth, great in prosperity; Pius the Sixth, great in adversity; subject of his funeral oration.

Of all the Pontiffs who have filled Saint Peter's chair, in a succession of almost eighteen hundred years, few had more difficulties to contend with than Pius the Sixth; nor do the annals of the world record events more memorable, or revolutions more extraordinary in the minds of men, or in the fate of nations, than those connected with his pontificate, during which he displayed an heroic firmness, surmounting the greatest obstacles, and a wisdom that could accommodate itself to a variety of conjunctures, without deviating from the path of virtue, and reconcile the maxims of the gospel, to the engagements and duties of sovereignty. For it is the error of false policy and impiety to imagine that religion, which ennobles and dignifies the soul, can deprive the social virtues of their energy; or that a Christian, supported by his confidence in God, and animated with the hope of immortality, can be less zealous for the public good, or less capable of promoting it, than a gloomy infidel, who, by the very system that destroys all future expectations



pectations beyond the verge of this mortal life, must sacrifice duty to interest, and aspire to no other happiness than the gratification of the passions that degrade him. Error of impiety, in imagining probity and sound policy, virtue and wisdom, irreconcilable! An error confuted by the conduct of Pius the Sixth, who, united, in his person, the virtues that adorn the sanctuary, with the wisdom that reflects lustre on the throne: who could say with Solomon, *I loved wisdom, and sought her from my youth*; and in whom solid piety, which in others is the tardy fruit of time, did not wait for the maturity of riper years. He learned to consecrate his heart to God, before it was susceptible of any profane impression; and the very amusements of his childhood were so many essays and trials of virtue, which never deserted him from his early youth to his grave. His prayer was that of the wise man, *Give me wisdom that sitteth by thy throne, and reject me not from among thy children.* Wisdom, c. ix.

To the study of literature, accompanied by the practice of religion, without which Saint Paul calls all the wisdom of the world *folly*. John Angelo Braschi, afterwards Pius VI. born of a noble family at Cesena, in Italy, applied himself from his most tender youth. Gifted with an extensive genius, penetrating, sublime; the sciences seemed to prevent and court him. Having exhausted the learned treasures of ancient Greece and Rome, his accomplishments soon recommended him to the greatest men in the capital of the Christian world, and afterwards to Pope Benedict the Fourteenth, under whose dictation he published those works which astonished the learned world, and immortalized their author. Near the person of this illustrious Pontiff, as another Paul at the feet of the Gamaliel, he imbibed those luminous principles which qualified him when raised to the pontifical throne,

throne, to write to Emperors and Kings with the dignity of Saint Gregory the Great, and to the illustrious prelates of the Gallican Church, their persecuted clergy and captive Monarch, with all the pathos and energy of Saint Cyprian, writing to the primitive martyrs. His classical knowledge was such, that after the many revolutions to which the Latin language has been exposed, if Cicero re-appeared, he would have been surprized to find in Braschi, his favourite Atticus. And as to his eloquence, the deistical French writer, who has published his life with an intention to injure his memory, is forced to acknowledge its imperious charms, whenever he preached to his own flock at Rome, or in other places, whither his zeal called him, before crowned heads. To him could be applied what was said of the eloquence of a Greek orator, and afterwards of Saint Ambrose, *that on his lips the Attic bees had diffused all their honey*. In his life, his hearers had a model of the virtues he enforced. Doubly happy in commanding their attention by his powers, and gaining their hearts by his example.

Braschi's transcendant merit, after having filled some of the most important employments at Rome, with the address of a statesman, and the probity of a Christian, who must give an account of his stewardship, could not remain unobserved, or unrewarded by such a discerning Pontiff as Clement the Fourteenth, who raised him to the Roman purple. And Europe was unanimous in preaching his panegyric, when it acknowledged that he was the fittest person to succeed Ganganelli, whose virtues and talents were to shine in him with redoubled lustre.

Thus by a constant, uniform, and enlightened virtue, he attained to the summit of worldly honours, the more worthy of them, as they were the unsolicited reward of that merit which is courted and pursued by the honour from which it flies.

Sequitur

*Sequitur fugientem.* Being now placed in the two most conspicuous situations in life, a Pontiff and temporal Prince, he considers himself, as Saint Paul considers Princes, both ecclesiastical and civil, the ministers of God, for the good of the people; *He is the minister of God to thee for Good.* Romans, c. xiii.

In both qualities, to promote the spiritual and temporal happiness of his subjects, is the constant object of his care. He enlarges the sphere of knowledge, by the establishment of new academies and seminaries. Of his love and encouragement of the arts, the Musæum Pio Clementinum, was one of the most noble monuments this or any other age could boast.

To this great repository, the most precious remains of antiquity that the earth had concealed for ages from the artist's eye or had escaped the waste of war or the wreck of time, paid their tribute, and opened a new and immense range for skill and improvement. And if the languages of all the civilized nations were lost elsewhere, in Rome they could have been found; for there young people from all parts of the globe, from the rising to the setting sun, were instructed, who carried the truths of religion, and the improvements of civilization, to the most distant regions.

In Rome alone the late king of Sweden, whose untimely death Pope Pius the Sixth had reason to deplore, received a tribute of praise which no other city on earth could have paid him, when his own encomium was presented to him in forty-six different languages.

Ages will lament the fatal day, when the modern Hunns and Vandals drained the fountain which watered the most distant and barren climes, with such salutary and fertilizing streams, *when they placed the abomination of desolation in the holy places,*

left nothing but the traces of gothic barbarity in the groves and temples of the Muses\*, and stripped Rome, which, under the pontificate of Pius the Sixth, was the ark in which the alliances of ages were deposited, of those monuments of art, which, wherever their scattered remains may be hereafter found, will remind the historian of the glory of his reign, and of the plunders and profanations of the roving hordes of his barbarous persecutors.

But it was not by the encouragement of the arts and sciences alone that Pius the Sixth signalized his pontificate. Nothing that a temporal prince could have done to promote the prosperity of his subjects, in its various branches, was omitted. Under his fostering hand the arts and manufactures raised their drooping heads. Commerce was extended; coasts, infested by pirates, were protected; harbours fortified; roads cut through marshes and deserts before impassable; communications formed between distant places; new asylums opened to helpless indigence, by the foundation of new almshouses and hospitals; Plenty reigned in those places, which before had been scenes of famine. There was no calamity in his states to which he did not administer relief when it came to his knowledge. Nor was there a calamity unknown to him, but such as eluded the enquiries of the most attentive vigilance.

But what alone would suffice to illustrate his pontificate, and transmit his name to future ages in characters of immortality, more than if he had raised the pyramids of Egypt, because the undertaking

\* The savage rapacity of the French Republicans was such, that after plundering the churches and palaces, they rooted up the rare plants and shrubs in the gardens of the princes and nobles, and sold them at the public market for what they could bring. See Duppas' account of the conduct of the French at Rome.



taking was more arduous, and the success of more extensive benefit to mankind, was, the draining of the Pontine marshes. These marshes, formed by the overflowing of two rivers, and numberless streams running from the sides of the Appenine, covered an extensive tract of ground, said to have contained, in antient times, twenty-three noble cities.

A great part of the Appian road, so celebrated by antient historians and modern travellers, lay deep concealed under their surface, from which arose those pestilential vapours, as destructive as the winged arrows of death to the incautious traveller, who, if he closed his eyes within their reach, inevitably opened them in eternity. In the centre of those poisonous fens, death seemed to have erected his throne; and the inhabitants of the districts, bordering too close upon their limits, had the appearance of his pale satellites, from their resemblance to animated spectres. To restore salubrity to the air, and to agriculture its spoils, was an undertaking worthy of the sovereigns of Rome, whether in Pagan or Christian times. Several attempted it, but their reign was too short to make any considerable progress. It was reserved for Pius the Sixth, after a long interruption since the time of Pope Sixtus Quintus, to resume the work, and perform what so many Emperors and Popes had in vain attempted. Edifices and spires were seen rising from these places, which for ages were dreary abysses. The putrid atmosphere was purified; a golden harvest crowned the fertile fields, reclaimed from watry wastes, inaccessible to the plough, since Vano had written on agriculture, or Virgil his *Georgics*. The Appian road, the greatest monument of Roman grandeur, famed for the triumphal marches of the heroes of antient Rome, exhibited its broad and indistructible pavement to the eyes  
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of the astonished traveller; and if Sixtus the Fifth, on account of his enterprising genius, and the magnificence of his public works, was called the second Augustus of Rome, Pope Pius the Sixth might claim the honour of being his rival.

The Semiramis \* of the North, who has raised such a noble superstructure upon the foundation laid by Peter the Great, in transplanting the arts and sciences, the choicest fruits of the mild and genial climates of Greece and Italy, into the frozen regions of the remotest parts of antient Scythia, transmitted to Pius the Sixth the honourable tribute of praise and admiration.

All Europe admired a Pontiff and Prince in the decline of life, adequate to such undertakings. Emperors, Kings, and Princes, flocked to Rome, to see something in Rome greater than Rome itself. A Pontiff, uniting in his person the experience of age, with the vigour of mind, and the enterprising genius of youth;—the outward charms of the most fascinating figure, with the improvements of the most cultivated mind; and the magnanimity and magnificence of a temporal Prince, with all the meekness and piety of an Apostle.

What then! piety and meekness amidst the splendors of a throne, and the applause of surrounding nations! Yes, the eternal Wisdom, *through whom kings reign, and lawgivers decree what is just*, has proposed himself to all, without exception, as the pattern of meekness and humility; *learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart*. Christian virtue, of which a lowly and humble opinion of ourselves is the most solid foundation, is, at the same time, the greatest ornament of the sovereign power.

A king on his knees in his closet, is greater than a haughty monarch seated on his throne. Deeply penetrated with the spirit of religion, and the presence of God, he knows that if he has subjects, he

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\* Catherine, Empress of all the Russias.

has also a master, that the essence of royalty does not so much consist in the right of commanding men, as in the duty of obeying God, who says, *give ear ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations, for power is given you of the Lord, and sovereignty from the Highest, who shall try your works, and search out your counsels.* Wisdom ch. vi. v. 2.—and that if he is not a Saint, *a sore trial shall come upon him*, at the awful moment of death, when the king shall disappear, and nothing shall remain but the man, *who shall fly away as a dream, yea, who shall be chased away as a vision of the night.* Job. chap. xx. v. 8.

Thus Pius the Sixth, amidst the acclamations of the public, and surrounded by a blaze of worldly glory, was yet greater, when prostrate in prayer at the foot of the altar, the first exercise wherewith he always consecrated the occupations of the ensuing day, than when encircled by princes and nobles in his palace of the Vatican. Yes! great man! in vain would I praise in you worldly honours, and the gifts of nature, which rendered you the favourite of men, if I did not discover amongst them the gifts of grace, which made you the favourite of Heaven. It would be the funeral oration of a Titus or a Trajan, but not that of a Christian worthy. Were you even one of those heroes, who, by their valour and wisdom had conquered kingdoms and empires, in vain would I shed tears over your urn; in vain would I strew your tomb with flowers; in vain would I raise a cenotaph to your memory, after having expired in a foreign land, if, after subduing nations, you yourself were a slave to sin; and, if the soul of the departed hero were carried in the chains of unrepented guilt, before the awful tribunal of Divine justice, to be doomed to eternal darkness, and endless torments. In vain have the sculptors engraved your name upon pillars of marble

ble and bronze, amongst the great and illustrious of your days, had not you, by a Christian life, rendered yourself acceptable to the Sovereign Arbiter of the destiny of mortals, who declares in his scriptures, *him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God ; and I will write upon him my new name.* Revelations, ch. iii. v. 12.—And placed as I am between the altar and the tomb, in which God, after distinguishing for a short time the mighty of the earth, confounds them in the common dust, and makes them preachers from the grave, *vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,* Ecclesiastes *passim*, except to love God, and to serve him. Placed as I am between the altar and the tomb, the one reminding me of my duty, the other of my end ; the one exciting my terror, the other my remorse, in vain would I attempt to ascribe imaginary virtues to the dead, or enlarge upon any but real virtues, and such as God has promised to crown. Great and illustrious Pontiff, these virtues shone conspicuous in you.

Amidst the cares and embarrassments, inseparable from the duties of such an exalted station, Pius the Sixth, even on the throne, never relaxed in the piety and fervor of his early years. In prayer at the foot of the altar he felt that comfort, which the world, with all its grandeur, can never bestow. In prayer, at the altar, he acquired that constancy, that heroism, which afterwards bore him up against the pressure of calamity. A constancy and heroism which it is the exclusive privilege of religion to give, and which enabled him to rise superior to the smiles, as well as to the frowns of fortune.

What shall I say of his firmness and wisdom in those trying and delicate circumstances, when powerful monarchs solicited, contrary ways, and thus would have reduced any other to the disagreeable necessity of gratifying some, at the risk of displeasing  
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ing others. Yet his prudence satisfied all, whilst his firmness yielded to none. What shall I say of his pastoral zeal which induced him, in the decline of life, to undertake these painful and dangerous journeys into distant countries over the snows and precipices of the Alps, for the good of his flock? What shall I say of that awe and dignity, tempered with serenity and sweetness, which procured him such esteem and respect from the greatest men of a different persuasion, that the Lutheran Doctors of Augsbourg, have placed in their library, a monument which perpetuates his memory.

His very enemies, swayed by the imperious force of truth, bear testimony to his virtues. The French deist, who has published the Memoirs of his Pontificate, with no other view than to diminish the horror which must be raised in every breast susceptible of the least emotion of compassion for fallen greatness, acknowledges, *that he had ever been averse to profane pleasures; that when he was treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber, he gained the esteem of the public by the regularity of his conduct; that when promoted to the Roman Purple, he never altered from himself, IL NE S'EST JAMAIS DEMENTI; that all his virtues ascended with him on the Pontifical Throne, and that as Pope his life could not be more exemplary, dividing his time between his religious duties, his musæum, and the great library of the Vatican, without indulging any relaxation, but his annual excursions to forward the draining of the Pontine marshes\**. No higher encomium could be passed on a Prince, and Pontiff, than, that as a high priest appointed for men in things pertaining to God, according to St. Paul, Heb. c. 5. v. 1. he discharged punctually his duty; that as a pastor, *whose lips*, according to the Prophet, should keep knowledge, Malachi, ch. ii.—and *whose mouth should be the oracle of the law*, he explored

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\* Memoires Historiques et Philosophiques.

explored the mines of the sciences, of which Saint Chrysostom says, that the deeper they are searched, the more treasures they yield; and yet, after such an amiable character, Pope Pius the Sixth, falls unpitied under the hand of the merciless biographer who had drawn it.

Finding his actions proof against censure, he arraigns his motives, by attributing them to vanity, and thus passes sentence on what, in this life, cannot be an object of human judgment, that is to say, *the inward intention of another*, and involves, in the same invidious censure, all the great men of former times, who have left behind them those monuments which have been the admiration of succeeding ages. His firmness of soul, and that virtue which, like an immoveable rock in the midst of the stormy ocean, the groaning billows threaten in vain, could never be shaken by the menaces of the mighty whenever the duties of honour or conscience were to be sacrificed, he attributes to *obstinacy*. And what shews the last effort of impotent malignity, the healthfulness of a constitution, unimpaired by excess, and the calmness of his mind, unruffled by passion, and always kept in an even frame by a perfect command over himself, and an entire resignation to the dispensations of Heaven in the most trying conjunctures, he ascribes to *insensibility*. The unaffected amiableness of his manners, he attributes, *to his want of the knowledge of the world*, as if a man, bred up from his early days in one of the politest cities on earth, and raised to the highest honours, could be a stranger to all the accomplishments which education can bestow. And that probity which could never sport with sacred principles. — That probity which the Pagan world admired so much in its Cato and Aristides, he ascribes in a Christian Bishop, and the successor of an Apostle, to *his ignorance of the policy of courts*. But unfortunately

nately, for the happiness of mankind, the world, since the French Revolution, knows but too well the import of the words, *knowledge of the world, and the policy of courts, from the pen of a modern philosopher.* A modern philosopher's knowledge of the world, is the *experimental* knowledge of its corruption, and the refinement of its vices, of which it is the greatest happiness, and most desirable education to be ignorant. And as to the *policy of courts*, it is one of the many monstrous errors of impiety, to consider true religion as inconsistent with the glory and prosperity of states. For the same gospel that commands to *render unto God the things that are God's*, Mat. chap. xii. commands to pay tribute to Cæsar for the support of the state.

The same gospel that forbids injustice, and comprehends all the laws of civil society in one law of eternal love, *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; for this, says Saint Paul, *thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet*; and, if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Rom. ch. xii. The same gospel that forbids injustice, permits self-defence, and declares, that *rulers are the ministers of God to their subjects for good*, Rom. ch. xiii. consequently bound to protect them against foreign foes, as well as against domestic enemies; and the same gospel which recommends to them *the simplicity of the dove* in their lives and conversation, recommends *the prudence of the serpent*, in guarding against the wiles of an enemy, in strengthening themselves by confederacies, which enable the weaker to resist the incroachments of a stronger power; and in having recourse to all the means of defence suggested by true wisdom, not the less enlightened for being conformable to, and directed by the will of him who declares, that



that *righteousness exalteth a nation*; that the power of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, who, in DUE TIME, will set over it one that is profitable; and that because of *unrighteous dealings, injuries and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another.* Ecclesiasticus, chap. x. *Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur.*

Any policy then that is founded on equity and justice, is a policy which ancient Rome, governed by a Pagan Senate, would not have followed in the most virtuous age of her Republic, much less would modern Rome be directed by its maxims under a Christian Sovereign. The policy, with the ignorance of which the French deists reproach Pius the Sixth, is the policy of their modern school. Diffimulation and treachery; promises made and broken the same day; peace concluded and violated in the same breath; the most sacred rights trampled upon whenever force or fraud could prevail.

This was not the policy of a Pagan Regulus, who sooner than violate the oath he had sworn to his enemies, returned to meet death, which he preferred to fraud or perjury. But it was the policy of the French spoilers, after the conclusion of a delusive peace\*, purchased by the sacrifice of the ecclesiastical states, and by far the greatest part of the treasures of Rome, to march, under the mask of the most pacific intentions, an hostile army to seize the city itself, the remainder of its treasures, the palace, and the person of its sovereign, whom, in that very temple which Alatic, with his barbarians, had respected ages before, they insulted by attempting, but in vain, to force him to dishonour his venerable head with

\* The word *peace* is made use of here by way of catachresis, or abusively, for the ransom given by inoffensive persons, to pirates or highwaymen, on condition of granting them their lives or liberty. Pius the Sixth was at war with no power. Even a ship, belonging to the French, which was taken by one of his galleys, he ordered to be restored.



with the badge of impiety and rebellion, and to affix his name to a proclamation, for the purpose of rendering it subservient to their rapacity \*. Thus, in his very fall and declension from eminence, amidst armed barbarians, he preserved his dignity; and despoiled of his temporal authority and honours, he resembled the ruins of those magnificent and ancient temples, which, though stripped of their former decorations, will ever command the veneration of the sentimental beholder.

Placed in circumstances, which, according to the very enemy who has published the Memoirs of his Life, required the firmness and policy of Sixtus the Fifth, combined with the wisdom of Benedict the Fourteenth; all his sagacity and prudence could not have resisted superior force, aided by treachery.

In a similar state, ancient Rome or Sparta would have fallen into the hands of powerful and perfidious barbarians. And, in a similar state, the rulers of ancient Rome and Sparta, could not have displayed more wisdom or policy, than Pius the Sixth has done.

When his life is written by an impartial hand; when his cotemporaries are dead; when history lays open the hidden and mysterious springs of the events, connected with his reign, and posterity erects a tribunal, at which it is to judge, without dread of giving offence; then his virtues and wisdom will appear in their true light, as the symmetry and proportion of those beautiful statues which are placed in the porticos, or entrance of temples and public edifices, are better discovered, and seen to a greater advantage at a certain distance.

Had Pius the Sixth been one of the ancient Caliphs of Egypt, or some distinguished Pagan, infidel writers, whose favourite heroes are the Julians, and other persecutors of the Christians, would have blazoned forth

\* They attempted, in vain, in St. Peter's Church, to force him to wear the tri-coloured cockade. See Duppa.

forth his virtues, and the glory of his undertakings. But Pius the Sixth was a Christian Bishop and Prince. This double title has drawn on him the unmerited censure of the writer of his Memoirs, whose poison carries with it its own antidote, when he glories in *the triumph of philosophy, over, what he calls, sacred prejudices, and the scaffolding of superstition*—l' *echa-faudage de la superstition*—that is to say, the triumph of impiety over religion.

What lenity could the wearer of a mitre and a crown expect from the pupils of a philosophy which prescribes no other worship to its votaries than to swear, from their tender years, eternal destruction to the sceptres of kings, and annihilation to the temples of religion, with a more relentless rancour than fired the breast of the Carthaginian, who brought his child to the altar of his gods, on which he swore eternal enmity to the Romans.

A philosophy, which, under pretence of enlightening the world, has attempted to replunge it into the dark and perplexed chaos of idolatry and abominations, from which the eternal wisdom, who *has brought life and immortality to light*, has disentangled it. A philosophy which, transferred to a living idol, dressed in the allurements of seduction, and deified as *the goddess of liberty*, that outward worship, the bows and reverences, which the Christians were taught to render to him, *at whose name*, says St. Paul, *every knee should bow*. Philippians ch. ii. A philosophy which, after making the apotheosis of this new divinity, refined in her honour upon the human sacrifices of the ancient Canaanites and Mexicans. For the former only offered their children to Moloch, the latter offered but the prisoners taken in war to their grim idol. It was reserved for France, after abolishing the Christian religion, which, in the face of an enemy, discovers a brother, to crown the impiety of the human race, by producing a monster, who,

who, with equal pride and impunity, in the midst of a numerous assembly, and the glimmer of tapers, which served as funeral torches, offered up his father's bleeding head, at the shrine of Republican Liberty, in a church where they had overthrown the altars of Christ\*.

A philosophy, which, after shaking the foundations of society by irreligion, has introduced a brutal confusion amongst men, by annihilating the sacred ties of marriage, peopling the earth with men uncertain of their origin, without a knowledge of their fathers, all in a state of becoming, in a few years, a race of men incestuous, or parricides, or both†.

A philosophy which, by proclaiming in monumental inscriptions, and on the frontispieces of the dormitories of the dead, *that death is an eternal sleep*, removes every check to the passions, by doing away the dread of any responsibility for our actions in a future state, considers the most enormous crimes, and purest virtues, as unmeaning sounds, which, like so many fainting echoes, die away, and are confounded for evermore in the horrors of the grave, and thus lulls asleep with the hope of impunity, the parricide, the murderer, amidst the cries of an Abel's blood.

It was this philosophy, whose insatiable thirst of blood could not be satisfied with hetacombs of human victims, amongst whom kings, queens, princesses, the ornaments and edification of courts, aged and venerable prelates, priest and levites, were offered on its polluted altars, until it chained, to its triumphal

\* The monster's name is Philippe. See an account of the horrors attending the French revolution, in a book entitled, *The Bloody Buoy*, collected from French writers.

† Considering marriage as too great a restraint on the passions, they have quite done it away by their laws, and permit man and woman to separate, even at the bare discretion of one of the parties; which induced one of their orators to call France an *extensive market of human flesh*.



phal car, and sprinkled for the sacrifice, the most dignified of all human victims, a High Priest and Prince, before whose majestic countenance, and silver locks, a victorious Alexander would have fallen prostrate, as that conqueror did when he met Jaddus the High Priest, dressed in his pontifical robe, with the prophecies in his hands, at the gates of Jerusalem; or a ferocious Attila, as that fierce barbarian was softened by Saint Leo, when he met him at the gates of Rome. The other victims were slaughtered near their habitations, or at a small distance on the high-roads, where they were met by their executioners; but him they led to the sacrifice far from Saint Peter's shrine, where he requested to be permitted to die, and where he wished for the crown of martyrdom. *Baculum senectutis.* The staff of old age is mentioned with *veneration*; and propping the drooping body of a hoary sage, ever was considered, by savage as well as civilized nations, as the sceptre of reverence. It commands respect, under the hands of the grey-haired Indian, addressing his savage warriors. Solon's institutions commanded, that the audience should rise when an old man appeared at the theatre. And Moses, more enlightened than Solon, enjoins *to rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God.* Leviticus chap. x. v. 32.

Without any regard to that propriety which nature itself suggests to the uncultivated savage, his enemies deprived Pius the Sixth, bending under a weight of years, of the support of his tremulous steps, in sending his cane as a trophy to the French Directory, in whose hall it is exposed, as the poles on which the sacred ark was carried in procession, was exposed in the temple of Dagon, in the unhallowed land of the Philistines. Thus they most faithfully copied after the wicked, mentioned by Solomon in the book of Wisdom, *let us oppress the poor righteous man, let us*  
not



*not spare the widow, nor reverence the grey hairs of the aged.* Wisdom chap. ii.

The short span of time that intervened between his captivity and death, was not a favour but a punishment. It cannot be said that they granted him his life, but that they protracted his agony. It was the lenity of a Domitian, who would not permit the executioner to dispatch the tortured man on a sudden, but to make him *die gradually, that he might feel he was dying.* Ita percute, ut se sentiat mori.

When he was forced from his altars to die in a foreign land, the guardian angels of the temple quitted the holy places, on seeing the spotless Pontiff take his last farewell of the Sanctuary, of which he had been the brightest ornament. And if a poetical style were allowed in sacred oratory, it might be said, that the Roman Muses mingled their mournful elegies for the loss of their patron, with the plaintive accents of widows and orphans, deploring the departure of their father and friend.

A burthen that is divided becomes lighter. In affliction we feel some comfort in pouring our sorrows into the bosom of a friend, and the tears we shed with others who sympathize with our sorrows, are less bitter than those we shed alone. Pius the Sixth was deprived of this last comfort.

Arrived on the borders of the land described by Job, *a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness,* Job chap. x.—where it was publicly declared, that there should be *no gospel but liberty, no law but equality*, where strength is justice, religion a crime, and every civil institution confirmed with perjury, sworn to be inviolably maintained this week, violated the next. Arrived on the verge of a land covered with scaffolds, and drenched in the blood of the innocent, his three companions who had attended him from Rome, were forced to quit him, by order of

the Directory. Angels and Ministers of Grace protect the Lord's anointed, as you protected his Prophet in the lion's den ! In other countries, where he had appeared a few years before, his presence in every place, resembled the triumphal entrance of a king. But here the crowd that surrounded him, was no more than the funeral pomp of a victim prepared for the sacrifice, not decked with garlands, but covered with the sable weeds of mourning and affliction.

The same virtue that ascended with him on the throne, descended with him *down into the pit, and left him not in bonds.* Descendit cum illo in foveam et in vinculis non dereliquit eum. Wisdom, chap. x. v. 13. This heroic virtue, which religion alone can bestow, and which it is the privilege of the Christian to practise ! The poison is the last resource of an Hannibal ; the dagger of a Cato ; the bath and incision of the veins, that of a Petronius or Senecca ; but the Christian martyr, stretched on the blazing pile, chaunts the praises of his Creator, and forgets his torments at the sight of the crown, the reward of a momentary trial.

This heroic virtue, which made the chains of a St. Paul more precious than the sceptre of an Agrippa, rendered Pius the Sixth more glorious in the dungeon of a martyr, than when enthroned under the dome of a palace. This heroic virtue which rendered him victorious over all the vicissitudes of fortune, enabled him to meet death, not with the impatience of a sufferer, but with the joy and resignation of an Apostle, *to whom to live is Christ, and to die is gain ;* Philip. chap. i. v. 23.—*knowing that if his earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, he has a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* Cor. chap. v.

The member died as the head, the master as the servant, and the vicerent as the eternal King who  
had

had delegated the power. He died as Christ died on the cross, and St. Stephen on his knees, he died *praying for peace to the world, and forgiveness to his enemies!* The tear starts in the tender eye of pity at the recital of the unmerited sufferings of fallen grandeur, and the wanton persecutions raised against unoffending innocence. *Yet weep not for him, he died a death which kings themselves might envy. He died the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like theirs.* Num. c. xxii. Woe to the man however exalted in this life, who dies the death of the sinner; for it is written, *sharp judgment shall be to them that be in high places, and mighty men shall be mightily tormented.* Wisdom chap. vi.

What his persecutors, who buried with pomp the remains of the enemies of the Christian religion, in the temples from whence they removed the shrines of its martyrs, have done with his body.—Whether they have inclosed it in a coffin, or as has been reported, burnt it with quick lime, is as yet uncertain.—The scripture informs us, that the bodies of the Saints *are buried in peace*, because they can suffer no longer from the cruelty of tyrants, *but their name liveth for evermore.* Ecclesiasticus chap. xlv. From the very obscurity of the place, then, where they conceal his sacred ashes, his fame, like the hallowed fire which the Israelites hid in a pit, but, after the captivity, blazed when exposed to the rays of the sun. Mac. c. ii. From the very obscurity of the place where his ashes are concealed, his fame will shine forth with redoubled splendor, when the sun of truth will dispel the mist which inevitably conceals from us as yet several particulars relative to his life and death.

Quick-lime may have consumed his body, but it can never destroy the great charter of the pontifical dignity, and the pastoral succession, recorded in the gospel—the code of life, proclaimed by the lips of Christ,



Christ, and sealed with his blood; *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Mat. chap. xxviii.

The Roman Republic received the mortal wound, when Pompey's head was struck off on that shore now become a scene of contention between the followers of Mahomet, and the apostates from the religion of Christ. The tree of the French monarchy spreading its branches since the reign of Pharamond, was cut down by the same axe that fell on the neck of Lewis the Sixteenth. In the space of eighteen hundred years, all the governments on earth have changed from republics to kingdoms, and from kingdoms to republics, from both to empires. Many a flourishing state has been buried in the same shroud with its sovereign. For the prosperity of earthly kingdoms depends on the wisdom and valour of their rulers. The Church of Christ, governed for the space of eighteen centuries, by pastors of different characters and dispositions, numbers of whom died martyrs, has remained invariably the same. And the vessel, wafted by the breath of the Holy Ghost, though tossed on the stormy and tempestuous ocean of persecution, can never be lost in spite of the sleepiness or treachery of some of its pilots, some of whom, though few indeed when compared with the rest, have given too glaring proofs of the weakness of human nature. For the church of Christ is not founded on the wisdom, policy, or even (however desirable) the sanctity of her rulers, but on his infallible promise to be with her to the end of time. She may be persecuted, but without danger of destruction. For to her alone permanency is promised. This is a promise he has not made to kingdoms or empires, which he sets up, or pulls down, and whose vicissitudes and revolutions afford us an awful lesson of the vanity of human grandeur. For, when we see the greatest kingdoms and empires fall as it were  
one



one upon another : when we see kings and queens a few years back the idols of their subjects, eclipsing, by their glory and splendor, the pomp and magnificence of oriental grandeur :—when we see them bleeding on scaffolds : when we see the pillars of the sanctuary shaken, and its anointed pontiffs led captive as criminals : when we see such exalted characters deprived even of the funeral rites which a respect for our nature that is to rise one day immortal, should induce us to grant to the most forlorn object, we are convinced that uncertainty, inconstancy, and agitation, are the proper portion of all sublunary affairs, and that our greatest comfort is a deep sense of religion, which informs us, that *God chasteneth whom he loves* ; Heb. chap. xii.—that in this life we are exposed to storms and tempests, but that an unruffled calm is reserved for heaven ; that affliction purifies us as gold in the furnace ; that if there be temporal comforts, there are also comforts of a spiritual nature, a *peace* which the apostle in chains describes *as passing all understanding*, Philip. chap. iv. v. 7.—a kingdom which is not of this world, the reward of virtue which is within the reach of all, and without which none is ever to receive it. These important truths were deeply impressed on the mind of the Pontiff, whose obsequies we solemnize, and in whose life we find a pattern of those virtues which sanctify man in prosperity, and in adversity support him.

Illustrious prelates of the Gallican church ! worthy successors of the Irenæuses and Hilaries, the glory of antient Gaul ! You whose sufferings and virtues have made you a *spectacle unto the world, unto men, and unto angels*, Cor. chap. iv. who seem to be dispersed for the purpose of shewing the triumph of grace, and *making manifest the favour of the knowledge of Christ in every place*. 2 Cor. chap. ii. With what energy does not he enlarge on the merit of suffering, hope, and constancy, under the severest trials,

trials, in that admirable letter addressed to your Lordships for your mutual comfort, from one of the places of his banishment \*, and on the point of *being offered and finishing his course.* 2 Tim. c. iv. But though his life was spotless, yet as the judgments of God are unfearchable : as there is such a quantity of dross mixed with our purest gold, such chaff with our purest grain, our purest virtues tarnished with so many imperfections, that on appearing in the presence of God, into whose kingdom the slightest stain is not admitted ; who can say, *my soul is pure, I have nothing to answer for ?* as in our belief, divine justice may inflict temporary as well as eternal punishments beyond the grave, according to the quality of unexpiated offences, let us perform the sacred rites of our holy religion for the repose of his soul : and in compliance with the injunction of the blessed Apostle, let us offer up *prayers and supplications for kings, and all that are under authority.* 1 Tim. c. ii. May our most fervent prayers be heard also for our most gracious Sovereign, and the prosperity of his kingdom, in whose bosom, whilst impiety is overturning the altars and temples of surrounding nations, we are at liberty to pray unmolested. A kingdom whose martial achievements can be eclipsed but by its humanity, and whose power has no limits but the utmost verge of the ocean, as its fame has no bounds but the stars. *Imperium oceano, famam qui terminat astris.*

May our gracious Sovereign's reign be long and prosperous : his senate wise : his forces valiant : his people orderly and virtuous : and may he enjoy every blessing he can desire as a man and a sovereign. *Et quæcumque tendunt ad Cæsaris votum.* Tertullian. It is the prayer the Christians offered up for their Emperors who persecuted the primitive martyrs. With

\* Dated 10th of November, 1798, from the Carthusian Monastery, near Florence.

With how much greater fervour should not we offer it up for a monarch who protects the modern confessors. It is the spirit of the prayer his late Holiness offered up for his Majesty in his letter to your Lordships. May his prayers be heard, and ours for him.—And may all come to the knowledge of the truth and eternal life. AMEN.

*FINIS.*

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WRITTEN IN FRENCH BY

F. X. DE FELLER,

AUTHOR OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY, THE  
LUXEMBURGH JOURNAL, AND SEVERAL OTHER  
LEARNED WORKS.

TRANSLATED

BY THE REV. J. P. MULCAILE,

FROM THE THIRD EDITION,

REVISED AND CONSIDERABLY AUGMENTED BY THE AUTHOR.

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*Philosophy consists in knowing the Truth, or that which  
really is ; and that undoubtedly is God.*

S. Cyril of Alex. B. 5. against Julian.

